

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3747

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 809

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: CVIS, BTRA, QA  
SUBJECT: QATARI VISA PROBLEMS FOR U.S. BUSINESSMEN

REF: (A) STATE 154273 (B) STATE 140588 (C) STATE 129182

1. APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION AND COMMENTS RE PLIGHT OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ATTEMPTING TO SECURE QATARI VISAS. EMBASSY REGARDS THIS PROBLEM AS A SIGNIFICANT STUMBLING BLOCK IN OUR RELATIONS WITH GOQ AND HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO RECTIFY SITUATION FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. BOTH AMBASSADOR AND CONOFF HAVE HELD MEETINGS WITH DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION AND CHIEF OF POLICE (WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUANCE OF NON-OBJECTION CERTIFICATES (NOC) WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING RESIDENCE PERMITS) TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS PROBLEM. BOTH INDIVIDUALS APPEARED GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC AND PREVIOUSLY UNAWARE THAT A PROBLEM EXISTED. IN THE CASE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE, WE HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT ISSUANCE OF NOCS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN TWO WEEKS FOR AMCITS, PROVIDED THEY ENTER QATAR WITH 90-DAY VISAS.

2. ISSUANCE OF 90-DAY VISA NOW APPEARS TO BE CRUX OF PRBLEM. AFTER RECEIPT REFS B AND C, CONFFF VISITED CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND HEAD OF CONSULAR SECTION IN MFA TO EXPLAIN OUR VISA REGULATIONS AN TO HIGHLIGHT OUR CONCERN. ON JUNE 8 EMBASSY SUBMITTED DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO MFA REQUESTING CLARIFICATION OF GOQ VISA REGULZTIONS AND  
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EMPHASIZING THE RECIPROCAL NATURE OF OUR VISA REGULATIONS. IN ADDITIONN, MFA WAS INFORMED THAT EMBASSY WOULD ISSUE ONLY MAXIMUM SINGLE-ENTRY 90-DAY VISAS TO QATARI CITIZENS ELIGIBLE FOR B-1 AND B-2 VISAS. WE NOTE THAT THREE PREVIOUS DIPLOMATIC NOTES PROPOSING RECIPROCAL LIBERALIZATION OF VISAS HAVE GONE UNANSWERED. TO DATE, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM OUR LATEST NOTE.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, INCORRECT INFORMATION WAS PASSED FROM QATARI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO DEPARTMENT (REF A) RE WILLIAM PEREIRA COMPANY'S SUCCESS IN OBTAINING VISAS THROUGH ITS AGENT. COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE INFORMED EMBASSY THAT THEY THEY ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN ONLY 72-HOUR AIRPORT VISAS, AND THIS ONLY WITH LETTER FROM OFFICE OF THE AMIR. WE NOTE THAT A 72-HOUR VISA PRECLUDES THE ISSUANCE OF A RESIDENCE PERMIT AS LONG AS THE APPLICANT REMAINS IN QATAR.

4. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE FOLLOW UP EFFORTS TO DETERMINE STATUS OF OUR LATEST DIPLOMATIC NOTE ON THIS SUBJECT, AND AMBASSADOR PLANS TO DISCUSS THIS WITH AMIR WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS. WE ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT TO DISCUSS THIS SITUATION WITH QATARI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. IN ABSENCE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON PART OF GOQ, WE MAY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO AMEND 9 FAM PART IV APPENDIX C TO REFLECT REALITIES OF GOQ VISA POLICY. MORE THAN LIKELY THIS WOULD RESULT IN ONE ENTRY, 72-HOUR VISAS FOR QATARI CITIZENS, SOMETHING WHICH WE REGARD AS HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE.  
KILLGORE

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